

MEETING MINUTES

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts March 11, 2014 9:30 AM Two Hundred and Eighty - Seventh Meeting

In Attendance: Dan Ellison, KACD President; David Rowlett, KACD Vice President; Shane Wells, KACD Secretary-Treasurer; Kevin Jefferies, NACD Delegate; Jeff Rice; John Chism; David Cowherd; Rodney Bruce; Joe Paul Mattingly; Orville Bennett; Allan Bryant; Bobby Wilson; Debra Messer; Director Leah MacSwords, DOF; Reed Cripps, NRCS; Clifford Thornton *in proxy* for Karen Woodrich, NRCS; and Brian Hacker, RC&D Council.

Also in attendance were the Division of Conservation employees Johnna McHugh and Angella Reynolds. Quorum was met.

Meeting called to order - at 9:30 a.m.

KACD Minutes of the Last Meeting - February 7, 2014

Correction: Mr. Scotty Parson was not in attendance at the February 7, 2014 meeting nor did Mr. Parson second a motion. Motion made to approve the minutes with corrections was made by Mr. Joe Paul Mattingly, motion seconded by Mr. Allan Bryant **Motion carried.**

KACD Treasurer Shane Wells presented the KACD Treasurer's Report. Mr. Wells made the motion to accept the report as presented, motion seconded by Mr. David Rowlett. **Motion carried.**

Open discussion regarding the overall costs of the 2014 Agriculture Legislative Reception. A refund, amount unknown, is expected back from Aramark Catering due to previously ordered and paid for food items that were not distributed. Reception contributor funds have been received from KACD, Kentucky Corn Growers, Kentucky Small Grain Growers, Kentucky Poultry Federation, and Kentucky Pork Producers. No funds have been received from the Kentucky Dairy Development Council. Mr. David Cowherd commented that the delay in payment might be due to the complaint he received regarding no dairy being served at the reception. This will be remedied by serving ice cream next year.

Contract for Financial Services

Final contract not ready for execution, negotiation is in the process of completion.

KACD Correspondence was presented by Mr. Dan Ellison. – No correspondence was submitted at this time.

NACD Director's Report

Mr. Kevin Jeffries reported that everything went well at the NACD national meeting in San Francisco. There was a good turnout despite weather issues across the country. Mr. Rodney Bruce accompanied Mr. Jefferies during most of the meetings and activities.

Protection of the Prairie Chicken (listed endangered species) recommendation was not passed in the committee process (11-0), but did get brought back up and was passed on the floor. The Prairie Chicken is an endangered species native to the Western US that has a detrimental effect on agriculture and cattle farms grazing pastures. The issue is more of an environmental concern.

Kentucky was recognized in the top ten for its district training and in the top ten for dues contributed to NACD. 105 of the Conservation Districts paid some portion of their dues to NACD in a total of \$45,415. This is an increase of \$3,275 from last year's total of \$42,140. Mr. Jefferies thanked Mr. Brian Hacker and the Kentucky's Employee Association for submitting his name for "Supervisor of the Year," which he was honored with at the convention.

The Farm Bill has finally passed and was signed by President Obama. The provisions of the Farm Bill are still being set. The Southeast Board meeting committee met. There were a lot of questions regarding the summer tour. Many people showed interest in attending the meeting and staying over the 2 to 3 days prior to the NACD Summer Board meeting in Indianapolis. There is a need to get tours together and let all interested parties know in advance so they can make their plans.

There are 2 Conservation Districts in Florida that have dissolved themselves, with a 3rd in the process. These districts were rather large and located in metropolitan areas. NACD is concerned as what to do to help educate the public to the purpose of the conservation districts. Many residents when interviewed did not know the services the conservation districts provided to the community. Once gone these conservation districts will never come back. Some states have their conservation districts set up where it is easier to dissolve than others. It is a state mechanism and not federally mandated. Assistant Director Johnna McHugh stated that for a conservation district in Kentucky to be dissolved there has to be a signed petition of the land owners in the district. Then it will go to a referendum where it is voted on by all the voters in the county, and then it would be presented to the Commission, which would vote on dissolution. NACD's financial situation has improved. Mr. John Larson and Mr. Earl Garber have been working hard to talk to corporations that would support funding and grants to the districts.

KACD Auxiliary Report

Auxiliary President Betty Barrick was out due to illness. She reported to that not much has changed. KACD Auxiliary Scholarships deadline was the 1st of March. Received applications are currently in the process of being put together for the 5 judge review committee. In the beginning of May another group will choose a winner and a runner-up for each category of those applicants. The KACD Auxiliary Officers will be meeting to narrow down the applications for the scholarship, to discuss the plans for the July convention.

2014 SE NACD/ KACD State Convention – Downtown Marriott, July 11-15

Agenda

The Division of Conservation staff has started contacting individuals that were recommended from the last convention committee meeting. They still need speakers and topic suggestions for both the Southeast and the state convention. The agenda will run the same as it has in previous years. Mr. Jeff Rice and President Ellison are working on a corporate sponsorships with a break out session. Director Leah MacSwords recommended a session about the efforts going on in Southeast Kentucky by state and federal agencies to increase the economy in Appalachian and the Southeastern counties of Kentucky. A panel discussion on this topic would discuss how to target and address agriculturally related topics that impact predominately rural areas of the nation.

Tours

Mr. Rowlett reported that tours for the Ashbourne, Woodland, and the Hermitage Farms are still being looked into. The reception cost at Churchill Downs would be close to \$30,000 versus the cost of \$12,000 - \$14,000 for a Kentucky-themed reception hosted at the hotel with Kentucky foods. They are considering adding a bluegrass band or a gospel group to perform. Currently only one tour is scheduled to Oldham County.

Reception

Mr. Jeff Rice sent an agenda to Mr. Mark Haney of Farm Bureau. He asked that everyone work together to get Mr. Haney committed to being a speaker. The next FB meeting is April 23. Mr. Jefferies has spoken with Farm Credit. Neither business has made a concrete commitment. Mr. Rodney Bruce suggested a break out session involving the Farm to School program. The planning committee is still looking for a speaker and/or sponsorship(s) for the merged KACD and NACD reception. Most speakers charge \$2500 or more. Crop insurance, Farm Credit, and Kentucky Proud might be possible sources of sponsorships. They are considering producers that offer alternative goods currently being bred, grown, or created in the state, such as wine, shrimp, and prawn. Last year's booth rental was \$250. This year the cost will be from \$300-\$1000 considering that there will be a higher visibility rate and a much larger venue than prior conventions. The size of the space needed is to be prorated per sponsorship level, to be defined by the convention committee. Open discussion regarding the commitment of a price. There is a conference call set for tomorrow morning to discuss this matter with the NACD Southeast planning committee. An all-inclusive rate needs to be set with a breakdown of what is offered, space, room, and level of sponsorship. Booth space is limited; this is why the conservation booths are preregistered and limited. Director Leah MacSwords discussed the levels used by DOF. It will become harder to approach large companies who are already budgeted for their fiscal year. The planning committee will meet to work on this in the near future. The levels used by DOF at their recent regional meeting are as follows:

- Platinum is \$5000, it includes online recognition, company logo in the program, full page advertisement in the program, company contact information in the program, speaker & display opportunities at the lunch, 2 complimentary registration for the convention, and booth rental.
- Gold is \$3000 and is comprised of the same as the platinum except for the full page, which is reduced to a ½ page ad instead.
- Silver is \$1500, same as Gold, but no speaking, presentation, complimentary registration or booth rental.
- Less than \$1500 is recognition on the website, mentioned in the program, contact information listed in the program.

Booth rental would be a separate charge. NACD recommended charging \$350 for pre-registration and \$400 after July 1, which would include the reception.

Spring Area Meeting Reports

- **Area 1** – President Ellison reported that it was a good meeting in Eddyville. There were 55 to 60 people in attendance. No resolutions were presented, and no elections occurred.
- **Area 2** – Mr. Wells reported that they had a good meeting. KACD elections were held with Mr. Ted Gisseup from Muhlenberg County elected as the new director and Mr. Ernie Giselle of Logan County chosen as his alternate. No resolutions were presented.
- **Area 4** – Mr. Joe Paul Mattingly reported that they had a good meeting in Taylorsville. He thanked Director Richardson and Mr. Clifford Thornton for coming and speaking. Mr. Mattingly was re-elected to the KACD Board. Jefferson County and Nelson County both presented resolutions. Neither was approved, and both are being revised to present again at convention.
- **Area 5** – Mr. Allan Bryant introduced his alternate Debra Messer, Boone County. The area meeting is scheduled for later this week.
- **Area 6** – Mr. John Chism reported that it was a good meeting. There were 60 people in attendance. No resolutions were introduced. Mr. James Gilbert Edgington was elected to replace Mr. Chism. Mr. Ira Linville was elected as alternate. Mr. Billy Doolin, Lillie Miller Johnson, Fayette Co. and Daryl Varner, Woodford Co. were elected as candidates to the Commission.
- **Area 7** – The meeting originally scheduled on March 5 in Somerset was rescheduled for April 2nd due to the weather.
- **Area 8** – The meeting originally scheduled on March 1 in Magoffin County was rescheduled for April 3rd due to the weather.

Division of Conservation Report

KACD Standing Committees

Standing committee conference calls to start soon. The two newest KACD members will be needed to chair in place of Mr. Randy London, who recently left the board, and Mr. Rowlett, since he is chairing 2 committees. Mr. Bryant offered to chair the Resolution Committee. Mr. Bobby Wilson offered to chair the Natural Resources Committee. President Ellison reminded everyone that if there were any additional changes to the committee membership list to contact Ms. McHugh or Ms. Angella Reynolds. Chairman need to do a better job at touching base with the committee members as to their attendance. The field representative listed on the call should contact each chairman by the end of the month to set up a date and time for the conference call.

2014 General Assembly Update

The House version of the budget is very similar to the Governor's version, which has been discussed with this group before. The \$1.5 million of equipment loan funds will still be removed, and the cut to DOC is still the same. The state cost share fund was reduced to \$0 for 2014; however, those funds were already allocated. The budget has \$2 million in state cost share for 2015, but the 2014 allocated funds would have to come from this amount leaving a balance of \$500,000 for the year. This version of the budget has passed through committee and will be taken up by the full House this week.

NACD Fly-In-March 25-26

There has been no contact from Congressman Thomas Massie or Congressman Hal Rogers. They have heard from Congressman Mitch McConnell, but nothing is on the schedule. Everyone else is on the schedule. All meetings and Capitol Hill visits are incorporated into the schedule. President Ellison, Mr. Rice, Mr. Bryant, and Mr. Rowlett will be leaving Louisville on March 25. NACD has meetings scheduled all day for Tuesday. There will be a Legislator's reception Tuesday afternoon. Wednesday is scheduled to start at 9:00 am and they will continue the Capitol Hill visits, which will include Kentucky senators and congressman. In addition they will visit with Ms. Karen Woodrich at NRCS. They scheduled to return Wednesday at 9:00 pm.

The Art & Writing awards went well. There were 24 winners, 19 participating in the awards presentation. The cabinet Secretary was present. A special thanks to Mr. Rowlett for his assistance with presentation of the awards and pictures. All winners received their awards, funds provided by Farm Bureau. The top 6 received 10 tree seedlings from the DOF and a book about mussels from Nature Preserves.

Envirothon Training went well. There were 16 teams that participated. Another special thanks to Mr. Rowlett for his assistance. He also was able to have the soil pit dug out and had a local company sponsor all the food. No cost to KACD for the Envirothon training. The National Envirothon was canceled this year. \$4,600 is all that remains in the Envirothon account, which is enough to pay for the state completion. Mr. Rowlett is looking for sponsors to assist with the cost of state completion and award to provide the winners their prize. State competition is May 21-22; they have 24 teams going to the east and 8 teams will be going to the west.

Dues notices to go out as soon as possible.

Over 100,000 tree bags were received last week. To save on shipping the bags are being pick-up or delivered directly to the conservation districts via the area meetings. For areas that have already had their meetings, the bags are being moved to a localized area to have them picked up by the field representatives.

Agency Reports

Natural Resources Conservation Service - Mr. Clifford Thornton reported that the Farm Bill itself indicates the appropriated funds. He is authorized to discuss the Farm Bill, but it has not been revealed as to the true amount approved to be allocated. There are to be some changes involving the amount of Farm Bill programs to be offered. The WEP is to be tabled and the EQIP program will remain to assist in covering the wildlife programs. NRCS will provide information when it is available. Ms. Karen Woodrich's detail has been extended for 2 more months. Mr. Thornton will be remaining for 2 additional weeks, but he will be returning to Kansas. There will be a new State Conservationist assigned the week of March 24. NRCS is currently going through a series of audits; they are making sure to be very articulate and thorough in all documentation. Currently NRCS is looking at the attention to detail of the administrative transformation.

Soil health is very big right now and is continuing to be pushed across the state and country. He is very optimistic about the Strike Force Initiative and what it will do for the 74+ counties within the Initiative. Mr. Thornton thanked everyone for their assistance and shared experiences.

President Ellison expressed his concern regarding the Farm Bill's link between conservation and the compliance of crop insurance.

Kentucky Division of Forestry - Director MacSwords thanked KACD and the conservation districts for the seedling sales. There were 88 counties that did participate totaling \$48,554 in orders. 168,000 seedlings were distributed throughout the state by the conservation districts. This does not include the Arbor Day Association contribution of seedlings. The weather has pushed back the completion date of the nursery, it is now tentatively scheduled to be completed by April 1.

Federal funding was received for the Triplett Creek Watershed project in Rowan County. These funds are to be used not only for conservation measures, but also to work with forest land owners offering a Firewise component to reduce wildfires in this watershed area. Funds are available for target areas only.

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack is working with the White House Rural Council to form a project focused on promoting green wood as a building material. Director MacSwords has been invited to the White House, along with 75 architects and engineers to promote wood use as to assist the economics in rural communities.

KACDE - President Leslie Fourqurean was not present. Mr. Brian Hacker appreciated the opportunity of the district employees to be allowed on the agenda at the area meetings. Since there is no official National Competition for Envirothon, the district employees will be looking into presenting an additional prize to the Envirothon state winners.

President Ellison thanked both Mr. Jefferies and Mr. Hacker for their efforts in promoting attendance at the Southeastern regional meeting and their assistance on the planning committee.

Kentucky Department for Natural Resources - Deputy Commissioner Sandy Gruzesky was not in attendance.

University of Kentucky - Dr. Steve Higgins was not in attendance.

Department of Agriculture - Mr. Steve Kelly was not in attendance.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Jefferies, motion seconded by Mr. Rowlett.

Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

Next Meetings will be held:

Next Board Meetings:

May 13th

July 13-15 KACD Convention-Bowling Green

September 9th

November 11th (State Holiday)

Approved